

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

Alexandria Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
v.) Case No. 1:20mj118
JESUS TAPIA)

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Shawn M. Matthews, Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), Washington Field Office, being duly sworn, depose and state the following:

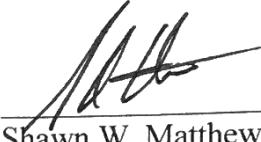
1. This affidavit is submitted in support of a criminal complaint charging JESUS TAPIA (TAPIA) with interference with flight crew members and attendants in violation of Title 49 United States Code, Section 46504.
2. This affidavit is for the limited purpose of obtaining a criminal complaint. It is not intended to include each, and every fact and matter observed by me, or known to the government. I have set forth only those facts necessary to support probable cause.
3. I have been a Special Agent with the FBI since 2005. During my career, I have worked a variety of investigative matters to include criminal and counterterrorism violations. I am currently assigned to investigate matters related to civil aviation and airport security at Ronald Reagan National Airport located in Arlington, Virginia and Dulles International Airport Located in Dulles, Virginia. As a Special Agent of the FBI, I am empowered by law to conduct investigations, make arrests and execute and serve search and arrest warrants for offenses enumerated in Title 49 of the United States Criminal Code, including offenses in violation of Title 49 United States Code, Section 46504.

4. Title 49, United States Code, Section 46504 prohibits any person on an aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States who, by assaulting or intimidating a flight crew member or flight attendant of the aircraft, interferes with the performance of the duties of the member or the attendant or lessen the ability of the member or the attendant to perform those duties, or attempts or conspires to do such an act.

5. On or about March 21, 2020, TAPIA was a passenger on board Frontier Airlines flight 536, Denver to Reagan National Airport. As Frontier 536 started its descent into Reagan National, TAPIA complained to a flight attendant that he felt nauseous. The flight attendant gave TAPIA an air sickness bag and advised him to use the restroom if needed. TAPIA got up and instead of going to the restroom, moved toward the main cabin door. TAPIA threatened to open the main cabin door. Flight attendants attempted to get TAPIA to return to his seat. TAPIA refused and ignored the flight attendants' commands to move away from the door and return to his seat. Each time crew members would attempt to approach TAPIA or get him to sit down, he would threaten to open the door. TAPIA remained at the door as the plane landed and taxied towards Terminal A, Gate 7.

6. As the aircraft reached Gate 7, TAPIA opened the cabin door. The emergency slide deployed when the door opened. TAPIA exited the aircraft via the emergency slide and was apprehended by the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority Police on the airport operations area. TAPIA was taken to the Virginia Hospital Center for evaluation. On March 30, 2020, TAPIA was discharged from the hospital and subsequently arrested.

7. Based on my experience and the aforementioned facts, I submit there is probable cause to believe that JESUS TAPIA interfered with the flight and cabin crew of Frontier flight number 536 in violation of Title 49, United States Code, Section 46504.



Shawn W. Matthews
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 31st day of March, 2020.

Honorable Theresa Carroll Buchanan
United States Magistrate Judge